REMARKS

This reply is fully responsive to the Office Action dated January 28, 2008, and is filed within three - (3) months following the mailing date of the Office Action. The Commissioner is authorized to treat this response as including a petition to extend the time period pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) requesting an extension of time of the number of months necessary to make this response timely filed. The method of payment and fees for petition fee due in connection therewith is enclosed.

Objection/Rejection Summary

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action of July 26, 2007, wherein:

A. Claims 1, 3, 6-11, 13, 16-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Owensby (U.S. Patent No. 6,647,257, hereinafter referred to as the "Owensby patent");

B. Claims 2, 4, 12, and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Owensby patent in view of Sone et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,424,888, hereinafter referred to as the "Sone patent");

C. Claims 5 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Owensby patent in view of Shojima et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,259,990, hereinafter referred to as the "Shojima patent").

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §102(e)

A. Turning now to the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1, 3, 6-11, 13, 16-22 as being anticipated by the Owensby patent.

Claims 1, 3, 6-11, 13, and 16-19

Per the conversation with the Examiner on April 17, 2008, the Examiner stated that these claims are allowable. Thus, the Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner provide for timely allowance of the claims.

Claims 20-22

Provided that the Examiner provides for timely allowance of Claims 1-19 as indicated on April 17, 2008, the Applicants hereby cancel Claims 20-22.

B. Claims 2, 4, 12, and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Owensby patent in view of the Sone patent.

Claims 2, 4, 12, and 14

Per the conversation with the Examiner on April 17, 2008, the Examiner stated that these claims are allowable. Thus, the Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner provide for timely allowance of the claims.

C. Claims 5 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Owensby patent in view of the Shojima patent.

Claims 5 and 15

Per the conversation with the Examiner on April 17, 2008, the Examiner stated that these claims are allowable. Thus, the Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner provide for timely allowance of the claims.

CONCLUSION

The Applicants respectfully submit that in light of the above amendment/remarks, all claims are now in allowable condition. The Applicants thus respectfully request timely allowance of all of the pending claims.

Any claim amendments that are not specifically discussed in the above remarks are not made for patentability purposes, and it is believed that the claims would satisfy the statutory requirements for patentability without the entry of such amendments. Rather, these amendments have only been made to increase claim readability, to improve grammar, and to reduce the time and effort required of those skilled in the art to clearly understand the scope of the claim language. Furthermore, any new claims presented above are of course intended to avoid the prior art, but are not intended as replacements or substitutes of any cancelled claims. They are simply additional specific statements of inventive concepts described in the application as originally filed.

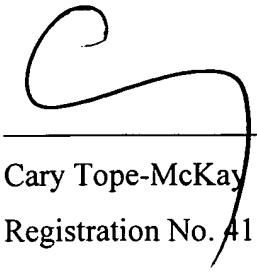
Further, it should be noted that amendment(s) to any claim is intended to comply with the requirements of the Office Action in order to elicit an early allowance, and is not intended to prejudice Applicants' rights or in any way to create an estoppel preventing Applicants from arguing allowability of the originally filed claim in further off-spring applications.

In the event the Examiner wishes to discuss any aspect of this response, or believes that a conversation with either Applicants or Applicants' representative would be beneficial, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fees that may be required or credit overpayment to the attached credit card form. In particular, if this response is not timely filed, the Commissioner is authorized to treat this response as including a petition to extend the time period pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) requesting an extension of time of the number of months necessary to make this response timely filed. The petition fee due

in connection therewith may be charged to deposit account no. 50-2738 if a credit card form has not been included with this correspondence, or if the credit card could not be charged.

Respectfully submitted,



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